

CROP HIGHLIGHTS

ACREAGE: Indiana's six major field crops totaled 12.2 million acres during 2003, up slightly from the 2002 planted acreage. Corn acreage for harvest was 3 percent above a year ago, while soybean acreage for harvest fell 7 percent. Winter wheat harvested acreage was up 30 percent from a year ago and all hay harvested acreage increased 8 percent above the 2002 level. Oat acreage for harvest increased 7 percent from the 2002 level. Other crops showing harvested acreage changes were processing tomatoes up 2 percent, potatoes up 32 percent, popcorn up 8 percent, and peppermint up 22 percent. Spearmint, at 1,800 acres, fell 10 percent from last year.

YIELDS: Field activities were gaining momentum by mid-April as farmers didn't hesitate to take advantage of days suitable for fieldwork. By May 4th, one-half of the intended corn acreage was planted and 17 percent of the soybean acreage was planted. Many early planted corn and soybean fields had already emerged. Frequent showers along with heavy amounts in many areas of the state in early May slowed fieldwork, especially in the southern regions. It was one of the wettest seasons on record. As of June 8th, only 92 percent of the corn acreage was planted and 78 percent of the soybean acreage was planted. Heavy flooding occurred several times, causing lost acreage and many drowned out areas, especially along river bottoms. It was the second wettest month of July during the last 108 years. Growing conditions were ideal during pollination, but dry weather in August reduced grain weight in many of the later planted fields. Soybean yields were significantly reduced by the dry August weather and Aphids. The best corn yields this year were in the west central, central and north central regions of the state. Harvest was underway during early September in some early maturing fields in the southwest. Crops dried down and advanced rapidly toward maturity. Corn and soybean harvest was in full swing by early October. Farmers were thankful for the near perfect weather and field conditions during most of the fall harvest

season. By mid-November, most of the corn and soybean fields were harvested. Yields in corn and soybean fields were highly variable within and between fields. The average yield for corn in 2003 was 146 bushels per acre, 25 bushels more per acre than the 2002 average. Portions of the west central and east central regions of the state had better than expected yields. The average yield for soybeans was 38 bushels per acre, down 3.5 bushels from the previous year. Winter wheat had an average record yield of 69 bushels per acre, up 16 bushels from last year and matched the original record high set in 2000. Oat yield averaged 70 bushels per acre, 8 bushels higher than the 62 bushels per acre set in 2002 and 10 bushels per acre below the record high yield of 80 bushels per acre established in 2001. All hay yield, at 3.25, was 0.6 tons above the 2.66 tons per acre in 2002. Average yield for popcorn was 3,300 pounds per acre, 300 pounds per acre more than the 2002 average.

PRODUCTION: Corn produced during 2003 was 786.9 million bushels, 25 percent above the 2002 level of 631.6 million bushels. Soybean production was 203.3 million bushels, 15 percent below the 239.5 million bushels produced a year earlier. Winter wheat production, at 29.7 million bushels, was 81 percent more than the 16.4 million bushels harvested in 2002. Tobacco production increased 5 percent, to 8.2 million pounds. Popcorn production totaled 267.3 million pounds, 19 percent above the 2002 level. Oat production of 1.1 million bushels was 21 percent above the 868 thousand bushels produced in 2002. All hay production, at 2.1 million tons, rose 30 percent while potato production also increased 27 percent. Peppermint production increased 20 percent, while spearmint production fell 10 percent. Apple production increased 27 percent to 51.0 million pounds. Peach production, at 3.4 million pounds, was 10 percent more than the 3.1 million pounds harvested during 2002. Blueberry production totaled 2.6 million pounds, a 16 percent decrease from the previous year.

"A Farm Field of Indiana"
Photographer ~~ Emilee Golden
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